

UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

of

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and

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for

**OPTICAL AND ELECTRICAL CHANNEL LOOPBACK
IN OPTICAL TRANSCEIVER MODULE**

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OPTICAL AND ELECTRICAL CHANNEL FEEDBACK IN OPTICAL TRANSCEIVER MODULE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/410,509, filed September 13, 2002, and entitled "Improved Clock and Data Recovery-Retiming Transceiver Integrated Chip," which is hereby incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. The Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates generally to optical transceiver modules, and more particularly, to loopback and pass-through paths within optical transceiver modules for redirecting input electrical or optical signals.

2. The Relevant Technology

[0003] The proliferation and significance of networking technology is well known. The ever-increasing demand for network bandwidth has resulted in the development of technology that increases the amount of data traveling across a network. Advancements in modulation techniques, coding algorithms and error correction have drastically increased rates of this data. For example, a few years ago, the highest rate that data could travel across a network was at approximately one Gigabit per second (Gb/s). This rate has increased ten-fold today where data travels across Ethernet and SONET (Synchronous Optical Network) networks at upwards of 10Gb/s. For instance,

the XFP (10 Gigabit Small Form Factor) Pluggable Module Multi-Source Agreement is directed at transceivers operating at approximately 10 Gb/s.

[0004] Figure 1 illustrates a typical configuration of an optical data transmission system 100. In system 100, a transceiver module 102 is coupled to a network 104 and to a host device 106 such as a media access controller (“MAC”) card or SONET framer. The transceiver module 102 has a receiver 108 that is coupled to network interface 110. The receiver receives an optical input from network 102 and converts into an electrical output signal, which after additional optional processing in transceiver module 102 is relayed to host 106. The transceiver module 102 also has a transmitter 112 that is coupled to network interface 114. The transmitter 112 receives an electrical input from host 106 via additional optional devices in transceiver module 102 and creates an optical signal which is then relayed into network 104 through network interface 114. The optical signal is then passed to transceiver module 120, which may be similar to transceiver module 102. Transceiver module 120 interacts with network 104 and remote host 122 similarly to the manner in which transceiver module 102 interacts with network 104 and host 106. Thus, for example, an electrical signal can be generated by host 106, transmitted to transceiver module 102 and therein converted to an optical signal. The optical signal is relayed at high-speed into and through network 104 and then directed to transceiver module 120. Transceiver module 120 receives the optical signal, converts it into an electrical signal, and passes the optical signal on to remote host 120. Of course, data can be transmitted in the opposite direction or between different transceivers and hosts as well.

[0005] Additional devices are typically included in transceiver modules, such as serializer/deserializers (SERDES). Thus, in operation, a serial optical data

stream received by the transceiver module 102 is converted to an electrical serial data stream by the receiver 108. This electrical serial data stream is deserialized by SERDES into four channels and transmitted via a parallel bus to host 106 for processing.

[0006] A similar deserialization occurs on the transmit side of the transceiver module 102 for the same reasons described above. In particular, a deserialized electrical data stream is transferred from the host 106 to another SERDES via parallel bus. This SERDES serializes this electrical signal. The transmitter 112 converts the serial electrical signal to an optical signal and transmits it onto the network.

[0007] One challenge in operation system 100 is in the debugging and maintenance operations of the systems. When data transmission between host 106 and remote host 120 fails, it is often impossible to know precisely where the failure has occurred without sending a network administrator into the field in order to test various links in the system. For example, the network administrator may need to individually isolate and test each of host 106, data fiber or bus 122, transceiver module 102, optical fiber 124, any of a number of devices on network 104, optical fiber 126, transceiver module 120, data fiber or bus 128, and remote host 120. Obviously this can be a daunting and expensive task if the source of the system failure is not quickly detected.

[0008] One device or feature that is often used in system diagnostics is a loopback. A loopback is a signal path inserted in the system to route a data signal back to its source or an accompanying device. For example, network administrators often manually tap into a fiber to route a signal back to the source or another detector. If data can be successfully sent from the source and received at a detectable endpoint, a network administrator can verify that the components in the signal path are operating

correctly. Through one or more loopbacks along different signal paths a network administrator can identify where in a system a system failure is occurring. In addition to identifying the source of system failures, such loopbacks are also conventionally used to test devices when downstream optical components are not yet connected. For example, it may be desirable to verify that a device is operating correctly by a burn-in process during manufacturing before the device is sold.

[0009] However, the cost of sending a network administrator to manually insert a loopback into a networked system each time a test is necessary can be expensive. Similarly, the cost and delay associated with testing devices via temporary loopbacks during device assembly is also undesirable. It would therefore represent an advance in the field of data transmission to provide methods and devices to assist in quickly detecting the source(s) of system failure and to evaluate device reliability without requiring the manual insertion and removal of loopback paths to test each component of an optical system.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] In general, embodiments of the invention relate to loopback paths and modes in optical transceivers for diagnosing devices and systems in optical networks. In particular, various embodiments of the invention have signal paths that can be remotely selected to route incoming signals away from their normal paths in order to determine whether certain paths and devices are functioning properly.

[0011] Other embodiments of the invention provide pass-through paths by which signals received from either the electrical or optical inputs are rerouted to a pass-through port that is configured for routing the signals in a “pass-through mode” for sending the signal to another device. Such an application may be used, for example, to daisy-chain transceivers or send signals to selected devices for analysis.

[0012] The various embodiments of the invention can be generally divided into two categories which are referred to herein as “optical loopback paths” and “electrical loopbacks paths.” As the name implies, optical loopbacks receive an electrical signal from an optical source, such as an optical receiver. Rather than forward the signal to the transceiver output port as is normal, the optical loopback path redirects the signal to the transceiver’s transmitter or an additional output port, for example. Similarly, electrical loopbacks receive an electrical signal through an electrical source, such as a transceiver input port, and redirect the electrical signal into the transceiver output port rather than to the transmitter, as would be typical.

[0013] A particular benefit of embodiments of the present invention is providing multiple loopback paths that may be used to test multiple components and data paths on both the transceiver module and on an attached network in order to identify with greater particularity the specific source device failures.

[0014] Accordingly, one embodiment of the invention provides an optical transceiver including an input port for receiving an incoming electrical signal, an output port for relaying an outgoing electrical signal, and a loopback path for selectively coupling an incoming electrical signal from the input port to the output port. According to another embodiment of the invention an optical transceiver includes an optical transmitter, an optical receiver, and a loopback path for selectively coupling an electrical output signal from the optical receiver to the transmitter input. According to yet another embodiment of the invention an optical transceiver includes both loopback paths for selectively coupling an incoming electrical signal from the input port to the output port and loopback paths for selectively coupling an electrical output signal from the optical receiver to the transmitter input.

[0015] In each of the foregoing embodiments the transceiver may include one or more of a post amplifier, a laser driver, a receiver eye opener, a transmitter eye opener, and other transceiver devices on an integrated chip. The loopbacks may be configured to pass-through some, none, or all of the post amplifier, laser driver, receiver eye opener, transmitter eye opener, and other transceiver devices in order to selectively diagnose or test the components.

[0016] According to yet other embodiments of the invention an optical transceiver includes an optical transmitter, an optical receiver for generating electrical output signal from an optical input signal, a transceiver input port for receiving an electrical input signal, a transceiver output port, a pass-through port, and one or more pass-through paths. The pass-through paths may be configured for selectively coupling the electrical input signal from the input port to the pass-through port in a pass-through mode or for selectively coupling the electrical output signal from the optical receiver to

the pass-through port. The pass-through paths can be used to divert signals from their normal paths and route them to other devices, such as transceivers.

[0017] Additional features and advantages of the invention will be set forth in the description which follows, and in part will be obvious from the description, or may be learned by the practice of the invention. The features and advantages of the invention may be realized and obtained by means of the instruments and combinations particularly pointed out in the appended claims. These and other features of the present invention will become more fully apparent from the following description and appended claims, or may be learned by the practice of the invention as set forth hereinafter.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0018] To further clarify the above and other advantages and features of the present invention, a more particular description of the invention will be rendered by reference to specific embodiments thereof which are illustrated in the appended drawings. It is appreciated that these drawings depict only typical embodiments of the invention and are therefore not to be considered limiting of its scope. The invention will be described and explained with additional specificity and detail through the use of the accompanying drawings in which:

[0019] Figure 1 illustrates a prior art optical data transmission system;

[0020] Figure 2 is an illustration of a system including a transceiver module according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0021] Figure 3A is another illustration of a system including a transceiver module according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0022] Figure 3B is yet another illustration of a system including a transceiver module according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0023] Figure 4A is a further illustration of a system including a transceiver module according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0024] Figure 4B is another illustration of a system including a transceiver module according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0025] Figure 5A is yet another illustration of a system including a transceiver module according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0026] Figure 5B is a further illustration of a system including a transceiver module according to an embodiment of the present invention; and

[0027] Figure 6 is another illustration of a system including a transceiver module according to an embodiment of the present invention.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0028] In general, embodiments of the invention are concerned with loopback paths and modes in optical transceivers for diagnosing devices and systems in optical networks. In particular, this invention relates to various embodiments in which signal paths are provided and can be remotely selected to route incoming signals away from their normal paths in order to determine whether certain paths and devices are functioning properly.

[0029] The various embodiments of the invention can be generally divided into two categories which are referred to herein as “optical loopbacks” and “electrical loopbacks.” The terms “optical loopbacks” and “electrical loopbacks” refer to the source of the data signal that is rerouted and not to the actual nature of the signal in the loopback path. Accordingly, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that an optical loopback path may include electrical signal transmission. As the name implies, optical loopbacks receive a signal from an optical source, such as an optical receiver. Rather than forward the signal to the transceiver output port as is normal, the optical loopbacks redirect the signal to the transceiver’s transmitter or an additional output port, for example. Similarly, electrical loopbacks receive an electrical signal through a transceiver input port and redirect the electrical signal into the transceiver output port rather than to the transmitter, as would be typical.

[0030] Use of the loopback paths can be selectable with a control line or digital control, for example. In some combinations, these features allow the transceiver to perform self-test or diagnostics of the data link, or diagnostics of the host system.

[0031] A particular benefit of embodiments of the present invention is providing multiple loopback paths that may be used to test multiple components and

data paths on both the transceiver module and on an attached network in order to identify with greater particularity the specific source device failures.

[0032] Other embodiments of the invention provide pass-through paths by which signals received from either the electrical or optical inputs are rerouted to a distinct pass-through port that is configured for routing the signals in a “pass-through mode” for sending the signal to another device. Such an application may be used, for example, to daisy-chain transceivers or send signals to selected devices for analysis.

[0033] Reference will now be made to the drawings to describe various aspects of exemplary embodiments of the invention. It is to be understood that the drawings are diagrammatic and schematic representations of such exemplary embodiments, and are not limiting of the present invention, nor are they necessarily drawn to scale.

[0034] In the following description, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. It will be obvious, however, to one skilled in the art that the present invention may be practiced without these specific details. In other instances, well-known aspects of network systems have not been described in particular detail in order to avoid unnecessarily obscuring the present invention.

[0035] Reference in the specification to “one embodiment” or “an embodiment” means that a particular feature, structure, or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment is included in at least one embodiment of the invention. The appearances of the phrase “in one embodiment” in various places in the specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment.

[0036] Referring now to Figure 2, depicted is a schematic depiction of a transceiver module 200 (*e.g.*, an XFP 10 Gb/s module) having a connection to a host 202 according to an embodiment of the present invention. The receive path includes a receiver 204 coupled to a network 206. The receiver 204 may be, for example, a receiver optical sub-assembly (“ROSA”) that receives and converts an optical signal to an electrical signal. Attached to the ROSA may be a post-amplifier 208 that amplifies the electrical signal to an appropriate power level.

[0037] The transmit path includes a transmitter 210 coupled to network 206. The transmitter 210 includes a transmitter optical sub-assembly (“TOSA”) that converts an electrical signal to an optical signal and transmits it onto a network. Also included is a laser driver 212 that controls a laser within the TOSA and the modulation of data within the electrical signal onto the optical signal. The laser within the TOSA is also biased to the proper operating current using a dedicated biasing and control circuit that may be contained within or outside of the laser driver.

[0038] As illustrated in Figure 2, loopback paths can be configured in various arrangements in order to divert a data signal from its normal path. Figure 2 illustrates examples of potential loopback paths, but one of skill in the art can appreciate that other loopback paths are possible. The loopback paths can route the data signal through desired transceiver components prior to directing the signal out of the transceiver. Accordingly, in the depicted embodiment of Figure 2, loopback path 220 routes an incoming electrical data signal from the incoming transceiver port 230 back to the outgoing transceiver port 232 without passing it through laser driver 212 or post analyzer 208. Loopback path 222 routes the data signal through both laser driver 212 and post analyzer 208 prior to directing the data signal to the outgoing transceiver port.

Loopback path 224 routes the data signal through laser driver 212 but not post analyzer 208 prior to directing the data signal to the outgoing transceiver port. Finally, loopback path 226 routes the data signal through post analyzer 208 but not laser driver 212 prior to directing the data signal to the outgoing transceiver port. Of course, directing the signal through different devices on the integrated circuit does not necessarily mean that the signal is modified by the devices and the signal may therefore pass transparently therethrough.

[0039] Similarly, as depicted in Figure 2, optical loopback paths can also be configured in various arrangements in order to route an incoming optical signal (converted to electrical) through desired transceiver components prior to directing the signal back to out of the transceiver. Accordingly, in the depicted embodiment, loopback path 240 routes an incoming data signal from the receiver 204 to transmitter 210 via post analyzer 208 and laser driver 212. Loopback path 242 routes the data directly to laser driver 212 without passing through post analyzer 208 prior to directing the data signal to transmitter 210.

[0040] Thus, depending on the design of the particular transceiver, a network administrator can select which stages of the transceiver a data signal will pass-through prior to being looped back out of the transceiver. The network administrator can thereby determine which stages of the transceiver are operating properly in passing through the signal as directed.

[0041] As depicted, in the presently discussed embodiment the disclosed loopback paths 220, 222, 224, 226, 240, and 242, as well as the post amplifier 208 and the laser driver 212, are integrated onto a single integrated chip. However, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that the foregoing can be separated among

multiple chips. For example it is conventional to provide post amplifier 208 and laser driver 212 on separate chips. In such an embodiment the above loopback paths would incorporate conductive paths to connect the chips.

[0042] Of course, loopback paths can be directed through or around other devices within an optical transceiver as desired. Referring now to Figure 3A, depicted is a schematic depiction of a system including a transceiver module 300 (*e.g.*, a 10Gb/s XFP transceiver) and a host 306. The transceiver module 300 includes dual eye openers 308, 310. The eye openers 308, 310 are designed to clean up high frequency jitter, *e.g.*, “open” the eye diagram of serial data streams for optical transceivers. The eye openers 308, 310 may also have low power modes (power down modes) that are enabled via a control pin, or by control through a digital bus or two wire interface. The eye openers 308, 310 may also have BERT functions whereby a BERT engine within the eye opener generates data and/or an error detector matches up incoming data to a predetermined pattern to check for errors in the data stream.

[0043] In the depicted embodiment, the receive path includes a receiver 312 coupled to a network and a receiver eye opener 308. The receiver 312 includes a receiver optical sub-assembly (“ROSA”) 314 that receives and converts an optical signal to an electrical signal. The receiver 312 also includes a post-amplifier 316 that amplifies the electrical signal to an appropriate power level. One skilled in the art will recognize that eye opener 308 and ROSA 314 may be manufactured and packaged using multiple methods. For example, the eye opener 308 and ROSA 314 may be integrated within a single ASIC or manufactured separately.

[0044] The transmit path includes a transmitter 317 coupled to a network and a transmitter eye opener 310. The transmitter eye opener 310 recovers degraded

clock and data values from an electrical signal that travels from the host 306 via serial path 304 (e.g., 10 G/s transmission line). As the electrical signal may degrade along this path 304, eye opener 310 compensates for this degradation and sends the electrical signal to the transmitter 317. The depicted transmitter 317 includes a transmitter optical sub-assembly (“TOSA”) 318 that converts an electrical signal to an optical signal and transmits it onto a network. The transmitter 317 also preferably includes a laser driver 320 that controls a laser within the TOSA 318 and the modulation of data within the electrical signal onto the optical signal. The laser within the TOSA 318 is also biased to the proper operating current using a dedicated biasing and control circuit that may be contained within or outside of the laser driver. The transmitter 317 may include eye opener 310 depending on the particulars of the packaging and design chosen.

[0045] This transceiver module 300 allows serial connections 302, 304 between the transceiver module 300 and the host 306. In particular, the receiver and transmitter eye openers 308, 310 compensate for signal degradation that occurs on these serial connections 302, 304 at high data rates, such as a data rate of about 10 Gb/s or higher.

[0046] As previously described with respect to post analyzer 208 and laser driver 212, loopback paths can be configured to direct an optical signal through neither, one, or both of dual eye openers 308, 310 on its way between serial input port 304 and serial output port 302. Similarly, as also previously described with respect to post analyzer 208 and laser driver 212, optical loopback paths can be configured to direct an optical signal through neither, one, or both of dual eye openers 308, 310 on its way between receiver 312 and transmitter 317. In some combinations, these features allow

the transceiver to perform self-test, or diagnostics of the data link, or diagnostics of the host system.

[0047] More particularly, a first loopback path 330 goes from the input 322 of the transmitter eye opener 310 to the output 324 of the receiver eye opener 308. This first loopback 330 allows the host system 306 to check the function of the host board and check that the transceiver module 300 is correctly plugged into its connector and is powered up properly. Because this first loopback 330 is integrated within the module 300, an installer can quickly determine whether the transceiver module 300 is properly installed or whether a failure occurred within the transceiver module 300 or host 306.

[0048] A second loopback path 332 is integrated with dual eye openers according to another embodiment of the present invention, passing from the input 322 of the transmitter eye opener 310 to the input 328 of the receiver eye opener 308. This second loopback path 332 allows the host system 306 to check that the receiver eye opener 308 is operating properly and that the transceiver module 300 is properly plugged into its connector and powered up properly. Because the second loopback 332 is integrated within the transceiver module 300, a manufacturer can quickly test the integrity of the receiver eye opener 308 prior to shipment as well as allowing a network administrator to easily check the receiver eye opener 308 after installation of the transceiver module 300.

[0049] Also depicted in Figure 3A is a third loopback path 334 integrated with dual eye openers according to an embodiment of the present invention. Third loopback path 334 travels from the output 326 of transmitter eye opener 310 to the output 324 of receiver eye opener 308. This third loopback 334 allows the host system 306 to check that the transmitter eye opener 310 is operating properly and that the

transceiver module 300 is properly plugged into its connector and powered up properly. Because the third loopback path 334 is integrated within the transceiver module 300, a manufacturer can quickly test the integrity of the transmitter eye opener 310 prior to shipment as well as allowing a network administrator to easily check the transmitter eye opener 310 after installation of the transceiver module 300.

[0050] Also depicted in Figure 3A is a fourth loopback path 336 integrated with dual eye openers according to an embodiment of the present invention. The loopback path 324 travels from the output 326 of transmitter eye opener 310 to the input 328 of receiver eye opener 308. This fourth loopback 334 allows the host system 306 to check that the transmitter eye opener 310 is operating properly, that the receiver eye opener 308 is operating properly, and that the transceiver module 300 is properly plugged into its connector and powered up properly. Because the loopback path 336 is integrated within the transceiver module 300, a manufacturer can quickly test the integrity of the receiver eye opener 308 and the transmitter eye opener 310 prior to shipment as well as allowing a network administrator to easily check the receiver and transmitter eye openers 308, 310 after installation of the transceiver module 300.

[0051] Figure 3B illustrates additional examples of loopback paths in a transceiver module 300. The loopback paths illustrated in Figure 3 are integrated with the dual eye openers 308, 310 in this embodiment. These loopbacks paths enable the testing of the optical front end components on the transceiver module 300. The loopback path 350 travels from the output 324 of the receiver eye opener 308 to the output 326 of the transmitter eye opener 310. This loopback 350 allows for testing of the front end components on the transceiver module 300, the receiver eye opener 308, and an optical data path on a network.

[0052] A loopback path 352 travels from the output 324 of the receiver eye opener 308 to the input 322 of the transmitter eye opener 310. This loopback path 352 allows for testing of the front end components on the transceiver module 300, the receiver eye opener 308, the transmitter eye opener 310, and an optical data path on a network. A loopback path 354 is from the input 328 of the receiver eye opener 308 to the output 326 of the transmitter eye opener 310. This loopback path 354 allows for testing of the front end components on the transceiver module 300 and an optical data path on a network. An loopback path 356 is from the input 328 of the receiver eye opener 308 to the input 322 of the transmitter eye opener 310. This loopback path 3546 allows for testing of the front end components on the transceiver module 300, the transmitter eye opener 310, and an optical data path on a network.

[0053] The above-described loopback paths are examples of loopbacks that may be integrated in the transceiver module 300 and is not meant to include all possible loopback paths. Additional loopbacks may also be integrated within the transceiver module 300 to test other data paths and/or components depending upon the included components. Such paths can be configured to include or exclude, by way of example only, post analyzer 316, laser driver 320, and other devices or components in the transceiver.

[0054] By way of example, Figures 4A-5B present more detailed views of various embodiments of loopback paths in optical transceivers having dual eye opener ICs. As with the previously discussed embodiments, some components that are transparent to the data path during normal operation are omitted in the present discussion for clarity.

[0055] Referring now to Figure 4A, a dual eye opener IC 402 on transceiver module 400 includes receiver eye opener 404 and transmitter eye opener 406. In the loopback path, an input of a buffer 408 receives the data path from the host into transmitter eye opener 406 and an input of a clock and data recovery device (“CDR”) 410 receives the data path from an output of the buffer 408. In receiver eye opener, an input of an RT 412 receives the data path from an output of the CDR 410 and an input of a buffer 414 receive the data path from an output of the RT 412 and relays the data back to the host.

[0056] One benefit of the herein disclosed loopback paths is that the host may verify that a specific combination of components are responding. In other embodiments, the data path is varied to reduce the number of components in the data path, thereby leading to a more exacting verification of component response. For instance, in one embodiment, a loopback path 420 includes coupling the input of the buffer 408, rather than the output of RT 412, to the input of buffer 414. Thus, the buffer 408, CDR 410, and RT 412 are removed from the data path allowing for testing of the remaining components. A failure from the first configuration along with a success from the second configuration would reveal that the first buffer is not responding.

[0057] Thus, from the foregoing examples it is apparent that the number and variety of loopback paths can be easily configured, in view of the description herein, to isolate or include each of buffer 408, CDR 410, RT 411, and buffer 414 as desired. The above-described loopback examples are examples that are not meant to include all possible implementations.

[0058] Figure 4B is an embodiment of yet another loopback path data through a dual eye opener 452 on an transceiver module 450. In the transmitter eye

opener 454, an input of a buffer 456 receives the data path from the host, an input of a CDR 458 receives the data path from an output of the buffer 456, and an input of RT 460 receives the data path from an output of the CDR 458. In the receiver eye opener 453, an input of a buffer 464 receives the input from an output of the RT 460 and relays the data back to the host. As with Figure 4A, the above-described loopback implementation is an example that is not meant to include all possible implementations. Thus, it is apparent that the number and variety of loopback paths can be easily configured, in view of the description herein, to include or exclude each of buffer 456, CDR 458, RT 460, and buffer 464 as desired.

[0059] Figures 5A and 5B depict embodiments of optical loopback paths of a dual eye opener IC. Referring to Figure 5A, in transceiver module 500 an input of the receiver 502 receives the data path from a network. In the receiver eye opener 504 on dual eye opener IC 506, an input of a buffer 508 receives the data path from an output of receiver 502, and an input of a CDR 510 receives the data path from an output of the buffer 508. In the transmitter eye opener 512, an input of a RT 514 receives the data path from an output of the CDR 510 and an input of a buffer 516 receives the input from an output of the RT 514. An input of a transmitter 518 receives the data path from an output of the buffer 516 and transmits the data to the network as an optical signal. As with Figures 4A and 4B, the above-described loopback implementation is an example that is not meant to include all possible implementations. Thus, it is apparent that the number and variety of loopback paths can be easily configured, in view of the description herein, to isolate or include each of buffer 508, CDR 510, RT 514, and buffer 516 as desired.

[0060] Figure 5B is an embodiment of yet another loopback path data path of a dual eye opener IC Chip 552 on a transceiver module 550. An input of a receiver 556 receives the data path from the network. In a receiver eye opener 554, an input of a buffer 558 receives the data path from an output of the receiver 556, an input of a CDR 560 receives the data path from an output of the buffer 558, and an input of an RT 562 receives the data path from an output of the CDR 560. In a transmitter eye opener 564, an input of a buffer 566 receives the input from an output of the RT 562. An input of a transmitter 568 finally receives the data path from an output of the buffer 566 and transmits the data to the network as an optical signal. As with the previous embodiments, the above-described loopback implementation is an example that is not meant to include all possible implementations. Thus, it is apparent that the number and variety of loopback paths can be easily configured, in view of the description herein, to isolate or include each of buffer 558, CDR 560, RT 562, and buffer 566 as desired.

[0061] Referring now to Figure 6, according to another embodiment of the invention, rather than direct loopback paths back to a transceiver output port or a transmitter, the paths can be directed to other port(s) and thereby be used as pass-through paths. For example, a data signal could be received in a transceiver module 600 at input port 602 and be routed on pass-through path 604 to a pass-through port 606 rather than to output port 608 or transmitter 612. Similarly, an optical pass-through can be performed by routing an optical data signal received at receiver 610 (converted to an optical data signal to an electrical data signal) to pass-through path 614 and on to pass-through port 616 rather than to output port 608 or transmitter 612. In this manner the transceiver module can be used to transparently pass a data signal on to another location in, for example, a daisy chain formation. The use of the transceiver module to send the

data signal through pass-through paths to pass-through ports can be controlled remotely by a network administrator as desired.

[0062] The optical loopback paths of embodiments of the invention may be enabled by a remote user or device by a variety of devices or methods. For example, a host may transmit a signal to an optical device, such as a transceiver module, to place the transceiver module in a loopback mode or in a pass-through mode so that all subsequently transmitted signals are routed through loopback or pass-through paths as indicated by the signal. The transceiver can then be returned to its normal mode of operation by a subsequent signal. Alternatively, the transceiver may have a filter that analyzes incoming optical side or electrical side signals to identify data “flags” that indicate that a certain set of data should be routed through a loopback path or a pass-through path. A host can then attach the flag to a data packet that it is desired to route through a loopback path or a pass-through path.

[0063] One such method for remotely diagnosing the operation of devices in an optical network includes receiving a control signal at an optical device, placing the optical device in a signal rerouting mode (such as a loopback mode or pass-through mode) in response to the control signal, and selecting a signal path on the optical device whereby an incoming data signal is routed from the input to a second output. The selected signal path may be selected, for example, from a loopback path wherein the second output returns the data signal to its source and a pass-through path wherein the second output comprises a pass-through port that directs the data signal to another optical device. In one embodiment the optical device comprises an optical transceiver, the input comprises an electrical input port, the first output comprises an optical transmitter, and the second output comprises an electrical output port. In another

embodiment the optical device comprises an optical transceiver, the input comprises an optical receiver, the first output comprises an electrical output port, and the second output comprises an optical transmitter.

[0064] One advantage of using the present inventive loopbacks is for use in host network debugging operations when a signal is not reaching a remote host. A user can identify whether a transmitted signal is reaching a transceiver module without having to send a network administrator physically out to open up the fiber, insert a connector, run tests, and then put it all back together. Rather, a network administrator can, via software, remotely send a signal and, depending on the status of the network, receive the signal back and evaluate the results.

[0065] Another advantage of using the herein disclosed loopbacks is that, whereas during normal optical communications between hosts strict adherence to a designated software protocol is required the use of the herein disclosed loopbacks may eliminate the need for a specific software protocol because there is no host to host communication. Hence, in those loopback paths that transparently pass the signal, the protocol is not important.

[0066] Yet another aspect of embodiments of the invention is using the herein described loopback paths to place the transceiver in a reflector mode. Network engineers can, for example, place the transceiver in a reflector mode and ping out to a transceiver even if the transceiver is shut down. This may be desirable if a user wants to keep a portion of a system running even if other portions, such as the optical transceiver, are shut down. The transceiver would thus just operate as a reflector, sending the data back to the source. Use of the transceiver as a reflector would be advantageous, for example, during system maintenance.

[0067] While the present invention has been described in detail in regards to a transceiver, it will be understood from the above description that embodiments of the present invention may be applied to a transponder as well.

[0068] Embodiments of the invention may also be particularly useful, for example, in manufacturing applications. During the manufacture of optical systems which use optical transceivers, the optical system is typically tested, or “burned in” before a transceiver is attached. A burn in is generally defined as running a new device for a period of time, often at high temperatures, in order to pinpoint early failures. This is often performed at various stages of production by attaching temporary loopback cables to perform the burn-in test. Unfortunately, these temporary loopbacks not only add an additional step in the manufacturing process, but they may break, resulting in an additional concern in that a manufacturer is not certain whether it is the optical system or the loopback that is faulty. Accordingly, the presently disclosed transceivers with integrated loopback paths can be used in place of the loopback cables to perform a burn in test of optical systems up to, but not including the optical transceiver. Rather than attach external loopback cables, a manufacturer can attach a transceiver and instruct the data signals to be sent through the loopback paths in the transceiver. Thus, because the transceiver is transparent to the system, the reliability of the optical system can be evaluated as it is tested in isolation without adding temporary cables.

[0069] The present invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from its spirit or essential characteristics. The described embodiments are to be considered in all respects only as illustrative and not restrictive. The scope of the invention is, therefore, indicated by the appended claims rather than by

the foregoing description. All changes which come within the meaning and range of equivalency of the claims are to be embraced within their scope.

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